



At home in music

April 11, 2019

It's a Friday night and couples at the Santa Fe Buffalo Thunder Resort are ready to dance and have a good time. As the lounge's lights dim, the country music band Perfect StrangR takes the stage.

As the stage lights begin their colorful interplay of patterns, bassist Frederico "Cisco" Archuleta, who by day works in hazardous materials management at Los Alamos National Laboratory, sets the pace and the beat for the opening song, a cover of George Jones' "I'm a One Woman Man."

"Ever since I was a kid I've enjoyed music," says Cisco. "Growing up, I spent a lot of time in the mountains with my dad, helping him with the family's cattle. I remember on days we would work up there, he would play Spanish folk music on these old eight-track tapes. I really enjoyed those songs—I knew that one day I wanted to play them on the stage."

"After my first band broke up in high school, I answered an ad from a band looking for a bass player," Cisco explains. "I had never played the electric bass, but I used my experience as a guitar player to get me through the audition." Cisco chuckles. "I wound up playing with that band for 10 years."

Que viva el mariachi!

While in high school, Cisco also began to play an instrument known as a guitarrón (Spanish for "big guitar"). This deep-bodied acoustic six-string bass guitar is one the traditional instruments used to play mariachi music.

"My senior year in high school, I went to Europe with a mariachi band," says Cisco. "We performed at the New Years Day Parade in London, England. We even had the honor of serenading the Queen of England."

"I still play mariachi-styled music today. I have a four-person band—vocal, guitar, guitarrón and accordion—and we play at weddings, birthday parties, special events and funerals for people who enjoy traditional instrumentals and Mexican folk and country songs."

Cisco (far right) plays the guitarrón with his modern mariachi band.

Don't be a StrangR

Two years ago, Cisco joined the country music band Perfect StrangR. Based in Tierra Amarilla, the band has been around for more than three decades. The band performs mostly covers of country artists such as George Strait and George Jones.

"We're a pretty busy band, playing gigs just about every weekend, not only in New Mexico but states such as Colorado, Texas and Arizona," notes Cisco.

When not busy performing live, the band members have taken the time to plan a new album.

In addition to his work with Perfect StrangR, Cisco recently started work on a solo project. "The music is a mixture of folk, mariachi, Spanish and a little bit of country. I am going to take my time with it—that's the best part of having a personal project."

Cisco's tenacious drive when it comes to composing and performing music has never waned. "It's turned into a pretty solid side career," Cisco says with a laugh. "I also have always been driven and inspired by the love and support from my children, girlfriend, family, friends, the many musicians I have jammed and worked with and of course the many supporters out there of the local music scene."

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